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# Biennial Sweet Clover

The Most Valuable Biennial  
Clover For Pasture, Soil  
Improvement, Hay



*Upper portion of Sweet Clover root showing wonderful growth of nodules containing the nitrogen gathering bacteria.*

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**B**IENNIAL SWEET CLOVERS are climatically adapted to practically every part of the United States. Classed as a weed only a few years ago, Sweet Clover is now considered one of the most important legume crops in the United States, and can be grown successfully on almost every type of soil except acid.

Practically all Sweet Clover is more or less mixed White and Yellow Blossom, and all is of equal value for soil improvement.

Sweet Clover which is predominantly White Blossom, makes more hay the first year, whereas the Yellow Blossom type, which is predominantly Yellow Blossom, makes a better hay crop the second year because of finer stems.

## SEEDING SWEET CLOVER

Before seeding Sweet Clover, the soil should be tested and if acid, lime should be applied. For a successful stand, inoculation with the proper commercial inoculant is necessary.

For Spring planting, Sweet Clover should always be put in with grain and is usually broadcast at the rate of 10 to 15 lbs. per acre. The nurse crop, when removed, should be cut high enough so as not to injure the Sweet Clover plants.

Sweet Clover can be seeded alone if conditions are favorable late in the Summer, provided the ground has been frequently cultivated for weeds.

## SWEET CLOVER FOR SOIL IMPROVEMENT

The most important single use for Sweet Clover is as a soil improving crop. It is estimated that Sweet Clover sown in the Spring with grain and plowed under for Corn in late April or early May a year later will return to the soil anywhere from 75 to 250 pounds of nitrogen per acre, which is approximately the equivalent of 20 tons of manure per acre. Where grown for soil

building, it is generally recommended to plow the Sweet Clover under in the Spring of the second year.

## CORN BELT ROTATION

An ideal rotation for the Corn Belt, including Sweet Clover, is:

- 1st year—Grain with Sweet Clover
- 2nd year—Corn

In this rotation, Sweet Clover is either pastured after the grain crop is removed the first year, or cut for hay late in the Fall. The second year the Spring growth is plowed under in late April or early May, and the land planted to



*A growth of Sweet Clover like this will just about make "new soil" out of some of our old clay fields. Sweet Clover roots are large, they grow down into the subsoil; they are easy to plow through and decay rapidly.*

Corn. This rotation maintains soil in remarkable fertility and ideal physical condition.

## SWEET CLOVER FOR PASTURE

Sweet Clover seeded with small grain can often be pastured from late August to late in the Fall, and from early Spring until late August of the second year. Its carrying capacity is amazing and it usually carries double the stock that mixed grass pastures will, on the same land. Often from one to four



# BIENNIAL SWEET CLOVER

mature animals can be grazed per acre. Sweet Clover pasture is high in mineral content, especially calcium, so is particularly valuable for dairy cattle and young stock. It is also valuable hog pasture the first year. Generally speaking, there is less danger from bloating on Sweet Clover than from any other legume. Sweet Clover pasture should be closely grazed, particularly the second year. If not kept well eaten, it will get coarse, seed, and die. Pastured closely, it furnishes succulent pasture for a much longer period. Where animals cannot keep it grazed close enough, Sweet Clover pasture should be clipped, but at sufficient height not to kill the growth.

## SWEET CLOVER FOR HAY

The best hay from Sweet Clover is usually secured the year it is sown and is the equal of Alfalfa in composition, palatability and feeding value. The cutting should be done after the buds have formed at the crown of the plant, which indicates that the plant is ready for Winter. The second year's growth becomes coarse and stemmy as soon as it comes into bloom, and if hay is desired it should be cut before blossoms appear. The second year, the plants must be cut high or they will be killed. No definite height can be given, but it must be cut high enough to leave two or three green leaves and branches on the stubble.

## OTHER USES FOR SWEET CLOVER

Sweet Clover is very valuable as a bee pasture and will produce more honey and as fine quality as any other crop.

The dense growth of Sweet Clover the second year makes it very valuable as a weed eradicator.

